

The Wheeler Silence by **Pavel Mikhailovich Florensky**

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Summary: This is a one-shot about the relationship between Nancy Wheeler and her little brother Mike. Canon-compliant and contains spoilers for Season 3.

The Wheeler Silence

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This is something I've been thinking about for a while. Nancy and Mike both get lots of flack, but I don't like that. This is a one-shot sibling bonding piece between Nancy and Mike.

Please enjoy and leave a review with your thoughts!

Hopper's memorial service hadn't been easy for any of them. Everyone felt they had left important things unsaid. They had all gathered in Hawkins Cemetery around a bodiless marker that only magnified the weight of their grief. Afterwards, Joyce Byers took her children and El home to grieve in peace. The others quickly disappeared as well. It didn't feel right to all be gathered together without the Chief. In a crisis he always took charge, but with no crisis and no Hopper their bonds felt soured.

Nancy and Mike Wheeler had returned to their house in silence. Their relationship over the years had faded to that: silence. Nancy was sitting on her bed dressed in all black, staring at the floor. Tears threatened to fall from her face until a soft knocking came from her door.

"Come in," Nancy choked out. The door glided open to reveal her brother, still wearing his suit from the funeral. The boy looked at his older sister uncertainly before she gave him a soft smile.

"Can we just...talk?" Mike asked as if she would send him away at any moment. That broke the older girl's heart. Had things really gotten so distant between the two that he thought she didn't want to speak with him?

"Yeah, of course we can," Nancy answered. Mike slowly traversed the room, looked at her uncertainly, and sat down on the bed next to her. Silence took over once again. After a few minutes, though, Mike

moved suddenly to throw his arms around his older sister.

"Nancy! I...I was really worried about you at the mall. And El. And Will. And everyone I guess. I just...I don't know if I can keep doing this," Mike half-shouted and half-cried into her shoulder. Nancy moved her own arms to wrap them around the boy.

"I know, Mike. I know. I feel that way too. I almost lost it when we had to leave you and the girls at the mall. I'm just so glad you're okay. Hopper, Billy, Driscoll...I don't know what I would have done if I had to add you to that list," Nancy sighed.

"So many people are gone. Now Mrs. Byers says she's taking El and Will away. Why can't anything be normal?" Mike said with equal dejection.

"I don't know. Maybe it never was...normal that is," Nancy whispered. Both siblings looked like wrecks but they clung to each other tightly. After many more minutes of crying in silence, Nancy pulled back to look at her brother's face. It was wet and pained, but he was alive. Her little brother was alive and that made her smile brightly.

"What?" Mike asked, confused by the attention rather than annoyed.

"I'm just glad you're still her, little brother," Nancy said softly. Mike blushed and looked downwards.

"I'm glad you're here too," Mike faintly responded.

"We should have been there for each other. You went through EL's disappearance alone. I never talked to you about Barb. Your first breakup happened and I wasn't there to steer you way from Lucas' advice. We should have been honest with each other, Nancy said sadly.

"Yeah, but we have another chance," Mike said with a hopeful smile. Nancy returned the look and planted a kiss on her brother's forehead.

"You're right, and this time we will do better," Nancy declared. Mike nodded. Another few minutes passed.

"Everyone thinks we're pretty cold-blooded," Nancy said to disrupt

the silence. She continued before Mike could respond: "I know they still love us but Jonathan, Steve, El, Max...they think we're hard as ice sometimes. I guess we give off that impression sometimes."

"That's true. Neither of us can deal with our feelings constructively," Mike responded with a self-deprecating laugh.

"We're doing alright now," Nancy mumbled.

"Yeah. You're my sister, and I'm not going to forget what that means again," Mike said resolutely.

"Remember when we were kids and were the closest of friends? We used to play and you'd come to me instead of mom when you needed comfort. I used to tell you everything," Nancy spoke wistfully.

"Yeah I remember. What happened to that?" Mike asked.

"I got older and too proud while you found friends your own age," Nancy answered.

"Well I want to have you back as my best friend. Don't tell Will though," Mike said with a tear-stained grin.

"I won't and I want that too. Will you face this crazy world with me?" Nancy replied to her brother.

"Together and fearless," Mike repeated as a new motto for their lives. The brother and sister stared at each other before embracing once again. In their own, odd way the two siblings had restored their bond of lifelong friendship.

In the morning Mike woke up on his older sister's bed. The two had fallen asleep there after their conversation. As Nancy awoke she was overjoyed to see that her usually proud little brother hadn't left when he realized where he was. Mike just smiled at her, silent but strong.

Following their reconciliation, Nancy and Mike had begun to trust each other with the important things in their lives. Nancy would talk to Mike about her fears and insecurities, while Mike would confide in his sister about his temper and romantic confusions. Unfortunately,

the same strengthening was not reflected within the Party. Once Will and El had moved away and Jonathan had gone off to college, both Wheelers found their circles broken. Lucas and Max spent lots of time alone together, Dustin made frequent radio calls to Suzzie in Utah. Steve and Robin began to focus on developing their post-school careers. Despite feeling the weight of their losses, the Wheeler siblings knew they could count on each other. Their silence never went away entirely, but now it was a silent understanding instead of a silent chasm.